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Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,
Middletown, Old Lyme,
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

February 24, 2014

Members:

Chester: Sally Murray
Clinton: Alan Kravitz
Rodney Kirouac
Cromwell:
Deep River: Bruce Edgerton *
Durham: Frank DeFelice *
Joe Pasquale
East Haddam: Cary Brownell * (7:05)
Lou Salicrup
East Hampton: Meg Wright *
Essex: Frank Hall *
Alan Kerr *
Haddam: Stasia DeMichele
Raul deBrigard *
Killingworth: James K. O'Brien *
Stephanie Warren *
Lyme: David Tiffany
Phyllis Ross
Middlefield: Robert Johnson
Middletown: Beth Emery *
Molly Salafia
Old Lyme: Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook: Kenneth Soudan *
Karen Jo Marcolini
Portland: Christian Rubenbauer *
Westbrook: Bill Neale * (7:10)
Marie Farrell * (7:03)

Staff Present:

Linda Krause
Judy Snyder
Torrance Downes
Margot Burns

* Members Present

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**

The members introduced themselves and attendance was taken.

3. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Alternate Marie Farrell was seated for Westbrook member Bill Neale. Mr. Neale arrived and Ms. Farrell was unseated.

4. **AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion of Bruce Edgerton, seconded by Marie Farrell, it was unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

6. **PUBLIC SESSION**

Frank DeFelice asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. There was no one at this time.

7. **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 27th, 2014 MINUTES**

Frank DeFelice asked that the January 27th, 2014 minutes be amended to reflect the follow changes. (***Bold Italic*** = *change*, ~~Strikethrough~~ = Deletion):

Frank DeFelice *wanted to* clarify that at the November meeting ~~he misspoke~~ *there was some confusion* and *it was* thought *that* Alan Kravitz was the vice chairman of the Commission.

Upon motion of Frank Hall, seconded by Crary Brownell, it was unanimously voted to approve the January 27, 2014 minutes, as amended.

8. **REFERRALS**

- a. City of Meriden – Various Regulations

Torrance Downes stated that the Meriden referral is not within 500' of any of the River COG municipalities and therefore does not need to be reviewed by this Commission.

b. Town of Essex – Revision of 2005 PoCD

Torrance Downes stated that the Essex Planning Commission is suggesting six new recommendations to be incorporated into a supplement to the 2005 Plan of Conservation and Development. The proposed recommendations are: 1) Implement Commercial Design Review Process; 2) Apply for National Register of Historic Places; 3) Raise height maximum for commercial buildings from 30 feet to 35 feet; 4) Revise coverage ratios for residential and commercial or replace with volume caps; 5) Reconsider the Gateway Conservation District and Heritage Gateway District as to how they might fit into Zoning Regulations; and, 6) Supplement existing demolition delay ordinance with an explanation, require a proposal for the replacement structure prior to permitting, and provide for more significant fines for violations.

Upon motion of Raul deBrigard, seconded by Bill Neale, it was unanimously voted to notify the town of Essex that there will be no intermunicipal impact as the plan is consistent with area town plans, regional plan and the state plan.

c. Town of Salem - (private) Chickens

Torrance Downes presented the Salem referral to allow residents to keep up to 10 hen chickens as an accessory use in a residential zone.

Upon motion of Bill Neale, seconded by Alan Kerr, it was unanimously voted to notify the town of Salem that the proposal will have no adverse intermunicipal impact for residential use.

d. Town of Haddam – Various Regulations

Torrance Downes presented the proposed revisions to the Haddam Zoning Regulations. The issue of medical marijuana dispensaries and producers was discussed. The proposed regulation would allow medical marijuana dispensaries and producers in a structure less than 10,000 sq. ft. in residential zones by site plan review. Members felt that this use should be reviewed as a special exception permit. This could also have an impact on the abutting towns of Durham, Middletown, Killingworth, and Chester.

Raul deBrigard stated that this is an agricultural use and it is a permitted use in residential districts. Christian Rubenbauer said that Portland was one of four towns in the state selected to have a medical marijuana dispensary and producer in the town. In Portland this business will be in an industrial/manufacturing zone. Concerns were also raised regarding the security needed, lighting, fencing, traffic, and other issues. Mr. deBrigard asked how other towns are handling this issue. Mr. Downes stated that many towns have placed a moratorium on this issue.

Upon motion of Bill Neale, seconded by Bruce Edgerton, it was unanimously voted to notify the town of Haddam that the proposal could have intermunicipal impacts on adjacent residential properties and with increased lot acreage, setbacks and special exception/special permit review could mitigate that.

Torrance Downes said that Haddam wants to allow, by special permit, microbreweries in the commercial zone. The C-1 district abuts Middletown but is unbuildable due to wetlands, stream and rock.

9. POCD - DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Margot Burns discussed open space planning in the region and state. One of the major projects that is being worked on is the plan of conservation with the River COG Land Trust Exchange. Ms. Burns distributed a booklet entitled; "Wildlands and Woodlands, A Vision for the New England Landscape" and highlighted page 25, figure 12, (attachment #1) which shows the existing regional conservation partnerships of the northeast. Ms. Burns stated that she is involved and works closely with the Fish and Wildlife Refuge, State forestry, UCONN Extension of Forestry, DEEP, and the nine land trusts of the 14 that participate in the lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange. Each town in the region has their own land trust board except for the towns of Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, and Portland. These towns belong to the Middlesex Land Trust Exchange.

The Land Trust Exchange tries to bring more conservation dollars into the region by grouping together areas to make larger acreage parcels that could receive these grants. The conservation plan will be a component of our regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

Linda Krause stated that Ms. Burns has been very active in making contact with these outside groups and getting them together with the Land Trust Exchange. These groups can share information such as the different kinds of resources, the character of the areas, environmental issues, cultural and economic impacts.

The Silvio O. Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge is the only fish and wildlife refuge that is based on the CT River watershed. Divisions of this are Whale Bone Creek, parcels in Salomon River which are part of the CT Yankee site, and property purchased by the Roger Tory Peterson group.

The following were distributed at the meeting: The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (attachment #2); The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange Natural Resource Based Strategic Conservation Plan A GIS Overlay Analysis (attachment #3); Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway (attachment #4); and CT DEEP Lands Percent Land Area by Regional Planning Organization, dated 2/21/14; (attachment #5).

"The Preserve" is a parcel of land in Middlesex County which borders three towns in our region, Westbrook, Old Saybrook and Essex. It is the last coastal forest between New York and Boston. This parcel is interesting in that it's a large track of land for habitat, it has varied topography and environment interesting. It is the largest single track of land that remains on the east coast.

Raul deBrigard made a motion, seconded by Ken Soudan, to support the acquisition of the preserve for open space.

Discussion followed and it was decided that the motion would be changed to a resolution.

Upon motion of Raul deBrigard, seconded by Ken Soudan, it was unanimously voted to: Resolve that the Regional Planning Commission supports the acquisition of the preserve for open space.

Beth Emery said she was unaware of the different designation. She asked if there is a list of the individual parcels and town maps showing the locations. Ms. Emery felt that if a vision map was created it would be a great help for the members. Ms. Burns stated that there is not one at the time, but the COG would create a map with those parcels.

Upon motion of Beth Emery, seconded by Bruce Edgerton, it was unanimously voted to create a map and a listing of open space parcels in the region.

10. DISCUSSION – IDEA VILLAGE, AQUAPONICS

Alan Kravitz will discuss this at the next meeting.

11. MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION VISITS

Members of the River COG staff will make a presentation at the March 19th Durham Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to discuss the regional plan of conservation and development and the issues town board members would like to incorporate into the plan.

12. MISCELLANEOUS

At the January 27th meeting Samantha Marone attended in the belief that she was a new representative from Westbrook. Upon further research it was found that Bill Neale is the member and Marie Farrell is the alternate.

Linda Krause said she received an e-mail from Office of Policy and Management that addressed Section 3-90 of Public Act 13-247 repealing the option of the COGs to establish and utilize a

regional planning commission to carry out the planning duties and responsibilities. Therefore all our COGs whether existing or in the process of being established must take appropriate steps between now and the repeals effect date which is January 1, 2015.

Ms. Krause and others will be meeting with Representative Jason Rejas to discuss this further.

13. ADJOURNMENT

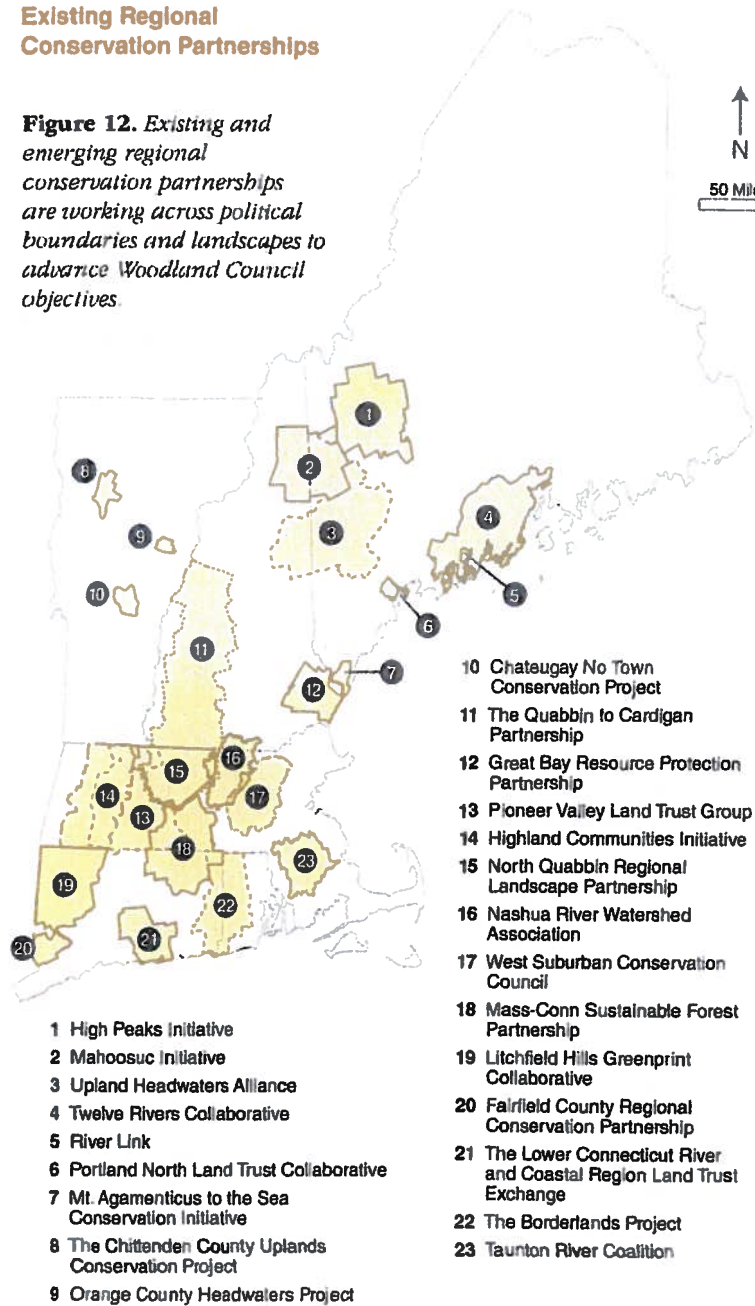
Upon motion of Bruce Edgerton, seconded by Bill Neale, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary

Existing Regional Conservation Partnerships

Figure 12. Existing and emerging regional conservation partnerships are working across political boundaries and landscapes to advance Woodland Council objectives.



The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange

Chester Land Trust

Clinton Land Conservation Trust

Connecticut River Land Trust

Deep River Land Trust

East Haddam Land Trust

Essex Land Trust

Haddam Land Trust

Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Lynde Point Land Trust

Middlesex Land Trust

Old Lyme Land Trust

Old Saybrook Land Trust

Salem Land Trust

Westbrook Land Conservation Trust



The Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE) is an informal collaboration of 14 land trusts representing the 17 communities of its coordinating organization the Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments (LCRVCOG), formerly the CT River Estuary Regional Planning Agency and Mid State Regional Planning Agency, consecutive CT River centered regional planning organizations just merged in large part to conserve and protect the unique character and environment of the communities of the lower CT River and Coastal Region. The creation of the LTE was an outcome of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 2006 funded *Lower CT River Ground-Truthing Project*.

That project sought to engage citizens in eight towns of the Lower Connecticut River Watershed to develop maps and plans designed to protect open space across town boundaries through creation of greenways, and to engage citizens in the lower Connecticut River watershed in a collaborative effort to identify and act on opportunities to protect open space across town boundaries. This project built on an

existing long lived conservation ethic in the lower River Region, and engaged individuals in a more encompassing regional vision of pride and protection of its extraordinary natural assets.

The Region surrounds the lower 36 miles of the CT River from the River's mouth at Long Island Sound to the northern borders of the municipalities of Cromwell and Portland and over 20 miles of Long Island Sound coast line from the western border of the Town of Clinton, to the eastern border of the Town of Old Lyme. It is home to portions of 2 Refuges, the Menunketesuck/Duck Island complex and the Salt Meadow Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge and the southernmost 354 sq. miles of the CT River watershed based Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge; the Wild and Scenic Eightmile River; 5 Ct State designated greenways – the Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway, the Connecticut River Gateway Zone Greenway, the Eight Mile River Greenway, the Old Lyme Greenway, and parts of the Blue Blazed Trail System Greenway. The estuary of the lower River was designated as a Ramsar Estuary of Global Importance (1994), has been proclaimed by The Nature Conservancy to be one of the World's Last Great Places, and listed as a Long Island Sound Stewardship Site (2005) by the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative. In 1998 the Connecticut was designated as an American Heritage



River, one of 14 in the Country. Running through the region is part of the Metacombet, Monadnock, Mattabesett Trail System designated in 2009 as a National Scenic Trail that strives to extend over 200 miles from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound; the region, as previously mentioned, also surrounds the Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone, a 30,000 acre area surrounding the lower 30 miles of the Connecticut River. Since 1974 the Connecticut River Gateway Commission has been charged with protecting the scenic and ecological properties of this unique landscape. Most recently the CT River Watershed was named the Nation's first National Blueway as part of the Dept. of the Interior's Americas Great Outdoors Initiative.

Since its first meeting in Sept. 2009, the LTE has worked internally, locally, regionally, State, and New England wide to promote landscape scale conservation for both wild and working lands and for habitat and wildlife protection through working with private landowners, State land managers, educators, US Fish and Wildlife, the nonprofit community, and through the municipal, regional, and State land use planning process. It has been a tenet of the Regional Planning Organization since the inception of the LTE, with strong support and funding from Eastern CT Resource, Conservation, and Development (RC&D), that only through community outreach and the practice of strong business principals by each of the member land trust will we be able to maintain and increase the pace of conservation and stewardship of our

undeveloped and working lands to benefit both wildlife and people.

The mission of the LCRVCOG in regards to the LTE is to create a stronger connection between the local, regional conservation community, and the Regional, State, and Federal land use planning process; further their ability to provide an educational and planning opportunity for environmental and landscape protection for members of their region's land trusts and conservation commissions to promote landscape linkages, tool creation, data acquisition, and sharing to enable effective collaboration and cooperation, in a regional manner, towards the creation of trails and greenways, and protection of existing habitat, water quality, and scenic and cultural landscape corridors; and identify possible collaboration mechanisms and business structures that will not take away from an individual land trust's unique and important relationship and place in its own community, but enable them to practice best management and business principles. We believe this will allow each to operate to its greatest potential concerning long term planning goals, future land acquisition, and the sustainable stewardship of their already existing protected open space. Business structures and collaboration mechanisms could include shared staff to help with record keeping, membership mailings, newsletter production, record keeping, fund raising, and grant writing as well as office space to provide a place for meetings, and where members could share computer hardware and software.

As in most of New England, much of the work being done to preserve open space in the LTE region, and

Connecticut, is through the efforts of our small land trusts organized and incorporated at the town level. With a few exceptions, these local land trusts have no paid staff and are run solely by dedicated volunteers who struggle with the myriad of legal, environmental, regulatory, fiduciary, accounting and other details involved in acquiring and stewarding land in protected preserves. Experience has shown that those towns in Connecticut with the most open space under preservation have the strongest grassroots support, which is the result of a sustained community communication and education effort by the local land trust, and often results in the ability of the land trust to begin to afford to hire staff. However despite its importance, the task of developing community support and maintaining a sustained effort for broad-based local support for preserving open space goals is very difficult to achieve and one of the biggest barriers to preserving quickly-disappearing farms, forests and wildlife habitat. Without grassroots support for open space preservation, over time the natural course of economic development in most communities inevitably leads to the gradualism of subdivisions and zoning changes that permit creeping commercial development. Effective communications programs are essential to the long-term sustainability of small local land trusts because community outreach is key to recruiting new, younger volunteers who are needed to step into the next generation of leadership for the local trusts.

Although working at the community level is critical to the sustainability of local organizations it is also important for the preservation of wildlife habitat and ecosystem

maintenance to work beyond local boundaries and include in local perceptions of conservation the importance of regional, large landscape, and even global connections and conservation goals. To this end the LTE has been meeting on a regular basis for the past 3 years.

Working in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC), New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), Wildlands and Woodlands, University of Connecticut Extension (UConn), CT DEEP, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and local community leaders land conservation meetings have included workshops concerning: Land trust collaboration, their various structures and roles in accelerating the pace and quality of land conservation; implementation of LTA Standards and Practices; Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) and information technology (IT) resources; fund raising, land owner outreach; Connecticut coastal and estuarine land conservation; habitat based management plans; conservation finance; maintaining diverse forest ecosystems across the region through planning and collaboration; funding opportunities through US Fish and Wildlife, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the LTA; New England Conservation Aggregation Project; listening sessions with LTA concerning needs assessments; Insurance Issues of Land Trusts; Form 8283 issues, gift acknowledgment letters, and notice letter on review of appraisals; regional conservation issues; yearly legislative participation opportunities and updates; US Fish and Wildlife Conservation Partners Program; The Nature Conservancy's

(TNC) future intentions within the Lower Ct River and Coastal Region; and communication programming. (<http://www.lcrclandtrustexchange.org/Pages/meetingsummaries.html>)

The LTE is currently working on 5 projects that seek to mitigate threats to the State's wildlife and coincide with the strategies and actions needed to protect and maintain wildlife habitat as outlined in the *State of Connecticut's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy*. The Plan states "*the most significant threats to Connecticut's land and waterscapes include habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation from development; changes in land use; and competition from non-native, invasive species. Other threats include insufficient scientific knowledge regarding wildlife and their habitats (distribution, abundance and condition); the lack of landscape-level conservation; insufficient resources to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat; and public indifference toward conservation.*"

The Plan focuses on species of greatest concern (GCN) and developed conservation actions / opportunities to mitigate these threats. They include: "1. *determine the distribution, abundance, condition and limiting factors for GCN species and key habitats*; 2. *assess and minimize the impact of invasive plant and animal species on GCN species and their habitats*; 3. *develop and implement applicable management strategies*; 4. *develop statewide guidelines and best management practices to address the impacts of development on GCN species*; 5. *continue efforts to participate in regional conservation efforts for GCN species*; 6. *implement current recovery and management plans and*; 7. *enhance efforts to provide information and guidance on GCN species and key habitats to land use planners, decision-makers and the public at the local, regional and statewide scale.*"

Community outreach projects include the *Lower CT River and Coastal Region Forest Stewardship Initiative (LCR&CR)*, The *Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway, Preservation of the Habitat of the American Cottontail*, and *Where Have All the Bats Gone?*, (<http://www.lcrclandtrustexchange.org/Pages/projects.html>)

The LCR&CR Stewardship Initiative

(<http://www.cag.uconn.edu/ces/forest/LCRCR.html>) is a collaboration between the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Forestry Program and the Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments (formerly the Connecticut River Estuary Planning Agency), and is supported by the US Forest Service, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the CT-DEEP Forestry Division. The project's long term goal is to stem the tide of forest



fragmentation and parcelization and keep forest as forest through outreach to the Region's private forest land owners, land use commissions and planning professionals, and the Region's community as a whole. Forest land owner outreach includes workshops to introduce and encourage stewardship of existing forest land to manage for wildlife within a working forest while respecting the needs and desires of the private forestland owner, as well as providing information regarding permanent protection through easement and fee. It also seeks to

engage the whole Regional community to raise esteem for the role that forest land owners play in maintaining the Region's quality of life through wildlife and habitat protection, clean water and air, economic and recreational value, and scenic quality.

The CT State designated Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway, a collaborative project of the LTE, CRERPA, US Fish and Wildlife Partners Program, UConn Extension, and CT DEEP www.lcrclandtrustexchange.org/Pages/projects.html begins on Long Island Sound at the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge at the mouth of the Menunketesuck River in the southwest corner of the Town of Westbrook and continues north through the Menunketesuck watershed as it straddles the Town boundary between Westbrook and Clinton. At the Town boundary of Westbrook and Deep River and that of Clinton and Killingworth the greenway broadens to include the many parcels of Cockaponset State Forest and its surrounding privately owned forest land identified through the *Lower Ct River and Coastal (LCRC) Forest Stewardship Initiative*, to the northern boundary of the Towns of Killingworth and Haddam.

This estuarine forested landscape and wildlife corridor includes the Menunketesuck/Duck Island complex and the Salt Meadow Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, one of 27 recognized Important Bird Areas in Connecticut by the National Audubon Society. It is recognized in part because of its importance to

nesting forest birds and as a key migratory stopover area for land birds, particularly in fall migration. The tidal marshes support a significant nesting population of Saltmarsh Sparrows, a species considered globally vulnerable to extinction. As the Menunketesuck River flows to Long Island Sound, it is critical to the health of the Menunketesuck/Duck Island complex, a key foraging area for the federally endangered Roseate Tern and nesting area for the federally threatened Piping Plover and a critical stopover habitat for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. The Greenway acts as a corridor for migrant birds as they approach the coast, Refuge unit, and the interior forest land in fall migration, and is shown as an important core forest area in the CT DEEP *Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy 2010 - 2015*. Salt Meadow Unit is one of the few remaining coastal forest habitats in Connecticut capable of supporting nesting forest interior birds such as Worm-eating Warbler, Wood Thrush and Pileated Woodpecker.



The Greenway connects the coast, and the considerable efforts of the Town of Westbrook and Clinton to preserve and connect their portions of the Greenway, through targeted property acquisition and trail development along the boundary between the two Towns, with the much larger forested landscape, known as the Cockaponset Triangle. This large forested landscape, which intersects with 55

sq. miles of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, stretches from Branford to Old Saybrook and north to the Maromas section of Middletown. The Greenway has, and will focus the communities within and around it on the conservation of this key forested landscape, of the Region, and of the State of Connecticut.

Regional Conservation efforts and an effort to help determine the distribution, abundance, condition, and limiting factors for GCN species has been, and will continue to be, a focus of the LTE as part of our community outreach efforts through the *Preservation of the Habitat of the American Cottontail* and *Where Have All the Bats Gone?*

The LTE held 2 field days with US Fish and Wildlife to assess land trust parcels for American Cottontail habitat and qualification for DNA sampling and has extended considerable effort, and raised funds, to help CT DEEP to help monitor bat populations and raise awareness concerning white nose syndrome. Many of the land trusts have held their own community workshops on both conservation efforts.

The LTE continues to meet most often on the third Wednesday evening at 7pm in September, November, January, March, and May in a continued effort to strengthen their organizations ability to meet the considerable challenges of protecting the Region's open space and natural and wildlife resources in perpetuity – which is a very long time!

The Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange Natural Resource Based Strategic Conservation Plan A GIS Overlay Analysis

*To Enable Effective Collaboration and Cooperation, in a Regional Manner,
Towards the Creation of Landscape Scale Greenway Corridors to Protect
Existing Wildlife Habitat, Water Quality, Working and Scenic Lands*

Getting Started

Educational Material for 1st Workshop

**Chester Land Trust
Clinton Land Conservation Trust
Connecticut River Land Trust
Deep River Land Trust
East Haddam Land Trust
Essex Land Trust
Haddam Land Trust
Lyme Land Conservation Trust
Lynde Point Land Trust
Middlesex Land Trust
Old Lyme Land Trust
Old Saybrook Land Trust
Salem Land Trust
Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
CT DEEP Forestry
CT DEEP Fisheries
Natural Resource Conservation Service
National Park Service
UConn Extension Forestry
US Fish and Wildlife Service**



**Technical Assistance Provided by:
National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)**

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Introduction

As in most of New England much of the work being done to preserve open space in the Region, and Connecticut, is through the efforts of small land trusts organized and incorporated at the town level. Experience has shown that those towns in Connecticut with the most open space under preservation have the strongest grassroots support, which is the result of a sustained community communication and education effort by the local land trust. Although working at the community level is critical to the sustainability of local organizations it is also important for the preservation of wildlife habitat and ecosystem maintenance, as well as outreach to a wider audience for funding and technical support, to work beyond local boundaries and include in local perceptions of conservation the importance of regional, large landscape, and even global connections and conservation goals and relate them back to the local level.

To this end the Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE) has been meeting on a regular basis for the past 4 years and has now chosen to create a natural resource based strategic conservation plan for the lower CT River and Coastal Region to enable effective collaboration and cooperation, in a Regional manner, towards the creation of landscape scale greenway corridors to protect existing wildlife habitat, water quality, and working and scenic lands. The analysis will include the land area of the towns of Clinton, Chester, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland, Salem, and Westbrook.

The member land trusts of the LTE have charged themselves with protecting the natural assets of an invaluable environmental and recreational Region of global significance that surrounds the lower 36 miles of the CT River from the River's mouth at Long Island Sound to the northern borders of the municipalities of Cromwell and Portland and over 20 miles of Long Island Sound coast line from the western border of the Town of Clinton, to the eastern border of the Town of Old Lyme. It is home to many of the State's Parks and Forests and portions of 2 Refuges, the Menunketesuck/Duck Island complex and the Salt Meadow Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge and the southernmost 354 sq. miles of the CT River watershed based Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. This area of the CT River watershed based Conte Refuge is now home to the Roger Tory Peterson Division, the Salmon River Division, and the Whalebone Cove Division; the Wild and Scenic Eightmile River; 5 Ct State designated greenways – the Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway, the Connecticut River Gateway Zone Greenway, the Eight Mile River Greenway, the Old Lyme Greenway, and parts of the Blue Blazed Trail System Greenway. The estuary of the lower River was designated as a Ramsar Estuary of Global Importance (1994), has been proclaimed by The Nature Conservancy to be one of the World's Last Great Places, and is listed as a Long Island Sound Stewardship Site (2005) by the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative. In 1998 the Connecticut was designated as an American Heritage River, one of 14 in the Country. Running through the region is part of the Metacomet, Monadnock, Mattabesett Trail System designated in 2009 as the New England National Scenic Trail that strives to extend over 200 miles from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound; the region also surrounds the Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone, a 30,000 acre area surrounding the lower 30 miles of the Connecticut River, from the nearest ridge top to nearest ridge top across the length of the lower River. Since 1974 the Connecticut River Gateway Commission has been charged with protecting the scenic and ecological properties of this unique landscape. Most recently the lower River Region was identified by the Nature Conservancy as a focal area in their report entitled *Resilient Sites for Terrestrial Conservation in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Region* and the CT River Watershed was

named the Nation's first National Blueway as part of the Dept. of the Interior's Americas Great Outdoors Initiative.

The LTE is an informal collaboration of 14 land trusts representing the 17 communities of its coordinating organization the Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments (LCRVCOG), formerly the CT River Estuary Regional Planning Agency and Mid State Regional Planning Agency, consecutive CT River centered regional planning organizations recently merged in large part to conserve and protect the unique character and environment of the communities of the lower CT River and Coastal Region, and the town of Salem. The creation of the LTE was an outcome of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 2006 funded Lower CT River Ground-Truthing Project.

That project sought to engage citizens in eight towns of the Lower Connecticut River Watershed to develop maps and plans designed to protect open space across town boundaries through creation of greenways, and to engage citizens in the lower Connecticut River watershed in a collaborative effort to identify and act on opportunities to protect open space across town boundaries. The project built on an existing long lived conservation ethic in the lower River Region, and engaged individuals in a more encompassing regional vision of pride and protection of its extraordinary natural assets.

The mission of the LCRVCOG in regards to the LTE is to create a stronger connection between the local, regional conservation community, and the Regional, State, and Federal land use planning process; further their ability to provide an educational and planning opportunity for environmental and landscape protection for members of their region's land trusts and conservation commissions to promote landscape linkages, tool creation, data acquisition, and sharing to enable effective collaboration and cooperation, in a regional manner, towards the creation of trails and greenways, and protection of existing habitat, water quality, and scenic and cultural landscape corridors; and identify possible collaboration mechanisms and business structures that will not take away from an individual land trust's unique and important relationship and place in its own community, but enable them to practice best management and business principles. This will allow each to operate to its greatest potential concerning long term planning goals, future land acquisition, and the sustainable stewardship of their already existing protected open space.

Since its first meeting in Sept. 2009, the LTE has worked internally, locally, regionally, State, and New England wide to promote landscape scale conservation for both wild and working lands and for habitat and wildlife protection through working with private landowners, State land managers, educators, US Fish and Wildlife, the nonprofit community, and through the municipal, regional, and State land use planning process. It has been a tenet of the Regional Planning Organization since the inception of the LTE, with strong support and funding from Eastern CT Resource, Conservation, and Development (RC&D), that only through community outreach and the practice of strong business and planning principals by each of the member land trust will we be able to maintain and increase the pace of conservation and stewardship of our undeveloped and working lands to benefit both wildlife and people. This Natural Resource Based Regional Strategic Conservation Plan will provide a strong base for this work to be built upon.

Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA)

Menunketesuck–Cockaponset Regional Greenway



Salt Meadow Unit - Stewart B. McKinney NWR



Ormer Property - Westbrook Land Trust

What is a greenway?

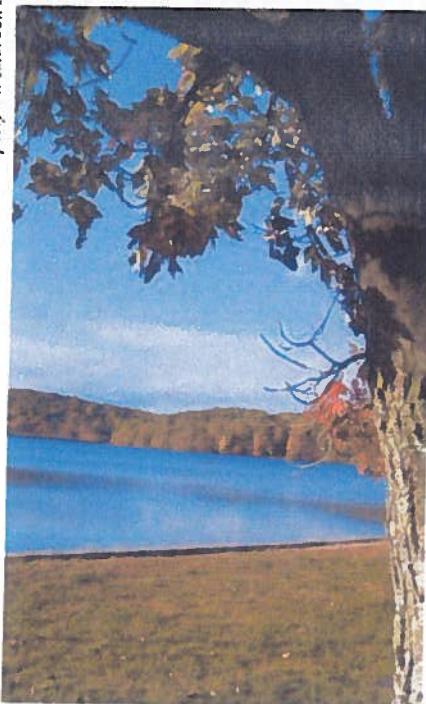
Learn about the new Menunketesuck - Cockaponset Regional Greenway and celebrate the natural and cultural history of one of Connecticut's last great contiguous coastal and riparian forested areas. Greenways can be much more than linear open spaces. They can be the links from city to country, from village to village, from state to state. They can reconnect people to their communities, to rivers, fields, and hillsides, enhancing the sense of place that helps define the quality of life in Connecticut. Greenways connect the places we live with the places we love.

The 18-mile long CT State designated greenway will function as a wildlife and multi-use corridor connecting the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge - Salt Meadow Unit in the Town of Westbrook to Cockaponset State Forest, the Quinimay Trail, surrounding private forest land, and public recreational resources throughout the municipalities of Westbrook, Clinton, Deep River, Killingworth, Chester, and Haddam (see map).

What will this greenway do?

The purposes of the Regional Greenway are to protect:

- private/working forested land
- water quality & quantity
- wildlife habitat
- public recreational/scenic resources that create the character of the lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region.



Cedar Lake - Chester - CRERPA

What is the greenway criteria?

The greenway was brought before the Connecticut Greenways Council by the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA) and established as a CT State Greenway under the authority of Public Act 95-335.

In order to meet the criteria for official designation as a greenway, a greenway must have at least one of the following characteristics:

Criteria Continued...

1. protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources or offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation;

2. connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors;

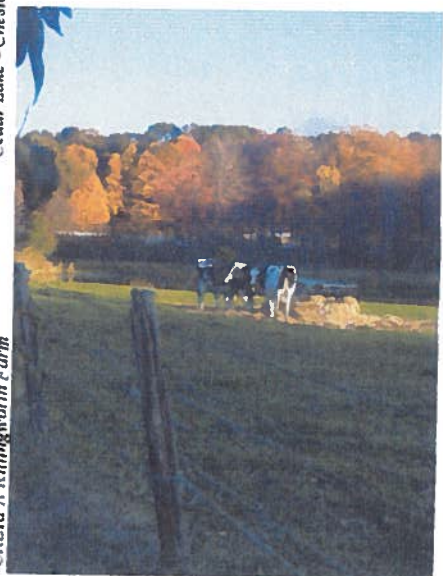
3. be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man-made corridor, including an unused right of way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals; or

4. be a green space along a highway or around a village.

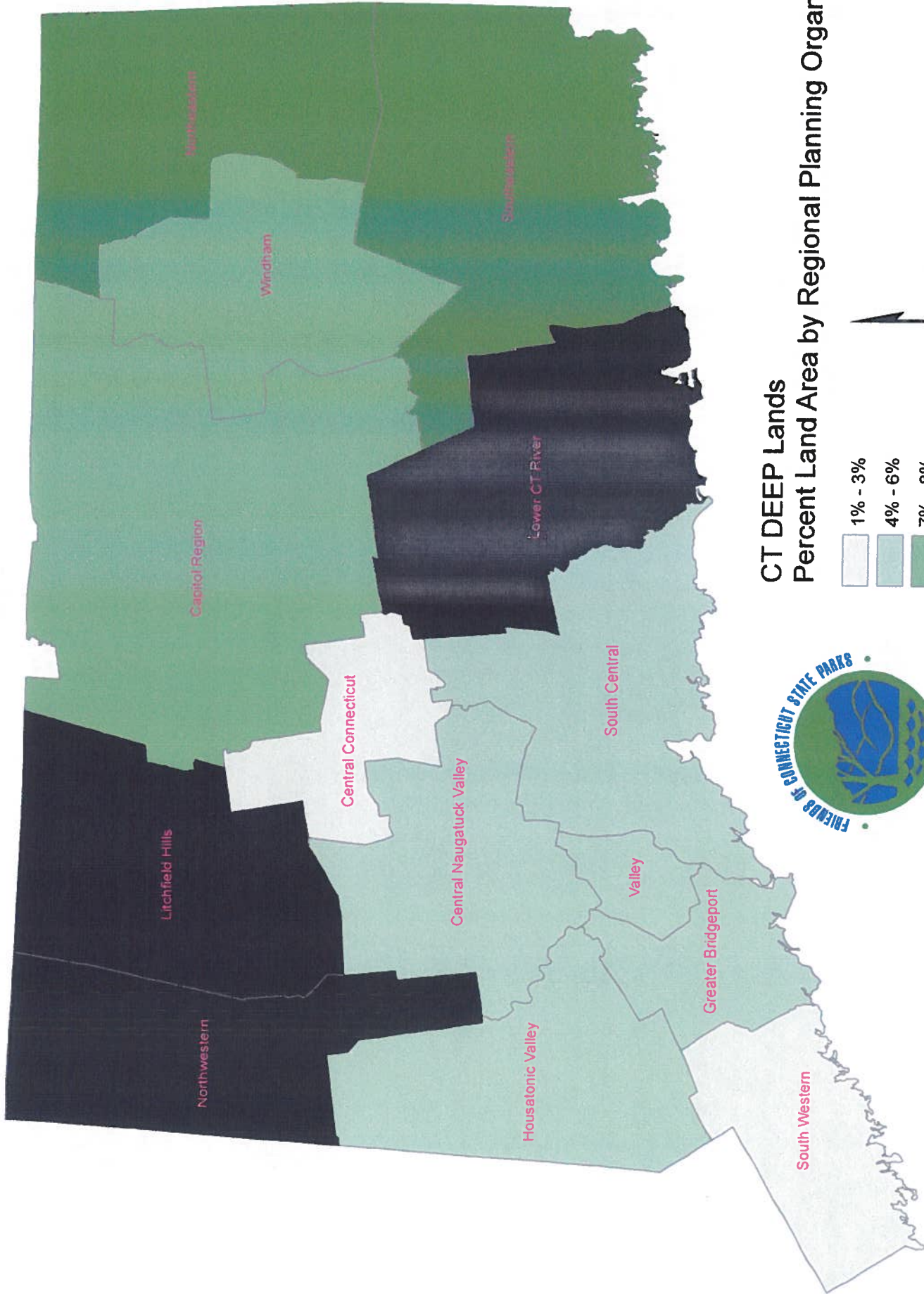
The critical element of all greenways, however, is connectivity.

Keeping the Greenway alive and relevant will need a strong commitment at the local and regional level. You can support the effort through your town's land trust or land use commissions.

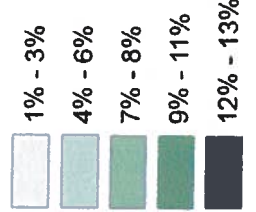
For additional information please contact Margot Burns, CRERPA, 860-388-3497, mburns@crerpa.org.



CRERPA Killingworth Farm



CT DEEP Lands Percent Land Area by Regional Planning Organization



GIS Data Source -
CT DEEP
Analysis: LCRVCOG
Map Created: 2/21/14

